



# Universal Ship Cancellation Society

## Data Sheet #33 – November 2007

### Submarine Operations in the Arctic

Bob Rawlins, USCS L-5490

#### Introduction

The Polar cap, covered with five million square miles of ice up to 35 feet thick, is a forbidding region, often with howling blizzards and surface temperatures to 60°F below zero. The bones of many explorers litter the Arctic wastes following failed attempts to reach the North Pole. It was not until April 6, 1909, that Commander Robert E. Peary and Eskimo Matthew Henson, journeying overland with four other Eskimos, were able to reach the North Pole. On May 9, 1926 Lieutenant Commander Richard E. Byrd was first to fly over the North Pole. In 1931, explorers Sir Hubert Wilkins and Lincoln Ellsworth attempted to cross the Arctic Ocean in an ex-Navy submarine named NAUTILUS. The expedition did not succeed, but sowed the seeds for future Polar explorations by submarine.

Commencing in 1946, U.S. Navy submarines sailed north to the edges of the ice pack, but the vastness of the cap and limitations of the submarines permitted only brief forays under ice. The propulsive power to conquer a sea route to the North Pole was born with USS NAUTILUS SSN-571, world's first nuclear powered submarine. In August, 1958, she made history by transiting from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean via the North Pole. Nine days later, USS SKATE SSN-578, entering the Arctic Ocean from the Atlantic, repeated the feat and, the following year, became the first submarine to actually surface at the North Pole. Since then, submarines of three nations - United States, Great Britain and Soviet Union, now Russia - have more or less routinely operated in the Arctic Ocean often visiting the North Pole.

This data sheet provides a summary philatelic history of unclassified submarine operations in polar waters in three sections:

1. US Navy nuclear powered submarine operations in the Arctic,
2. Foreign navy nuclear powered operations in the Arctic
3. US Navy diesel electric submarine operations in polar waters.

The extreme secrecy of its government precludes listing any but the first Soviet nuclear submarine achievement of the North Pole.

Submarine Arctic operations, with singular exception, are classified or closely held with a Navy press release following the operation providing minimal details. Fortunately, many submarines prepared cacheted and/or postmarked covers to document their voyages but these were distributed mostly to crews or sent to senior navy and government officials. Also fortunately, scientists of the Arctic Submarine Laboratory cooperated with collectors to provide a small quantity of covers for the trips usually mailed within days or weeks of the completion of the operation. Mail from those operations which are documented is elusive to extremely scarce in all but a selected few cases. Covers occasionally come on the market place in dealer's boxes and, more recently, in eBay auctions.

#### Format

The data sheet lists ship name, dates of operation and associated units, North Pole attainment with dates in parenthesis, cover postmark and cachet information. A summary of the operation follows each listing including pertinent details on covers known for the operation as well as amplifying information on quantity, cancel and cachet designer if known.

Information in the summary comments has been compiled from personal files maintained by the author including Navy Department records to which he had access, press releases, newspaper reports, personal comments or discussions with Commanding Officers or others involved in the operations, questionnaires sent to the submarines following an operation and covers or photo copies provided by interested collectors. The

philatelic information in the summaries was, for the most part, obtained from these personal contacts and inquiries to the individual submarines.

Illustrations are included for ship sponsored cachets and cancels, cachets provided by collectors or for cachets not identifiable as to sponsor. As a general rule OSC are not illustrated.

### **Abbreviations**

APLIS - Applied Physics Laboratory Ice Station

ASL or ARCSUBLAB - Arctic Submarine Laboratory

Cachets: cptr - computer; ht - hand tinted

Cancels: hc - hand cancel; mc - machine cancel

CNO - Chief of Naval Operations

HMS - Her Majesty's Ship

Icex - Ice Exercise

Lant - Atlantic

NP - North Pole

Ops - operations

OSC - official ship cachet

Pac - Pacific

PO - Post Office

Pr - printed

RSC - rubber stamp cachet

Scicex - Science Ice Exercise

Sub - Submarine (also used as a prefix)

UK - United Kingdom

USPS - United States Postal Service

USS (United States Ship) is not used preceding the ship name as not needed.

w/ with; w/o without

Cancels are classified by the USCS Locy System (revised).

Dates at the NP are as reported by the ships or recorded by the Arctic Sub Lab riders. Some ships used their local (home port) time, others used Greenwich Meridian Time (GMT) (Z); ARCSUBLAB riders invariably used GMT.

### **Acknowledgements**

The author compiled an earlier draft of this data sheet in 1990 which was updated by Charles Simpson, USCS 4335, through 1996 before his untimely death. Al Hayashida, formerly of the Arctic Submarine Laboratory, provided a declassified update of submarine Arctic operations through 2005. John Young USCS L-8219 and Bob Stark, USCS 11455 provided information not in the author's files; Ned Harris, USCS 3608 and Dr. Hal Vogel, USCS 9659 provided additional information and kindly reviewed the preliminary draft for accuracy and completeness.

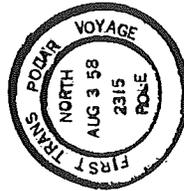
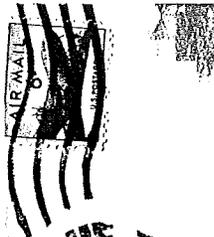
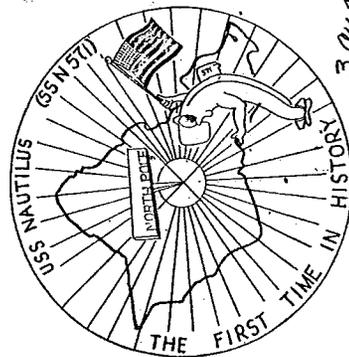
Information not included in this data sheet is gratefully accepted. Please send with a scan of any covers not listed to:

Bob Rawlins, PO Box 981, Healdsburg CA 95448.

# 1. U.S. Navy Nuclear Submarine Operations in the Arctic

| Ship  | Dates & Associated units             | North Pole | Postmarks  | Cachets   |
|---|--------------------------------------|------------|--|---|
| Nautilus SSN-571  | 1957 (8/19 - 9/15)<br>Trigger SS-564 | No         | none   | none  |
| Made rendezvous w/ USS Trigger off Jan Mayen Is; submerged Sep 1 at edge of ice pack, damaged periscopes, cleared ice pack to make repairs, reentered ice pack headed north, aborted approx 180 miles from NP (87° N) on Sep 4 due to gyro compass failure, moored alongside Fulton at Rothsay, Scotland to complete operation. |                                      |            |  |   |
| Nautilus SSN-571  | 1958 (7/22 - 8/12)                   | Yes (8/3)  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ty F "North Pole" 8/3/58</li> <li>2. Panama Greetings w/ same</li> <li>3. Ty F "Trans Polar 8/3/58</li> <li>4. USN Br 10864 8/16/58 (London)</li> <li>5. New York 8/25/58</li> </ol> | <p>Two color RSC (1570 covers)</p> <p>Same (116 cards)</p> <p>OSC (30 after trip)</p> <p>OSC (other varieties)</p> <p>OSC</p> |

Departed Pearl Harbor July 22 on Operation "Sunshine", entered Arctic Ocean Aug 1 passed under but did not surface at Pole on Aug 3, surfaced in Greenland Sea after 96 hours and 1830 miles under ice, completing first West to East Arctic transit at Portland, England Aug 12. Departed Aug 18, entered New York Harbor Aug 25. (Nautilus is the only nuclear powered ship ever to visit New York.) #1 cancel designed and carved from linoleum block by crew member E.F. Holland; #1 & 2 cachet designed by crew members John Krawczyk and William Engdahl who also assembled a guide to properly align the two RS, one in black, the other in red. #3 cancel designed and carved by crew member R.T. Bearden but not used for the voyage. After return PAO struck 30 impressions on covers w/ship OSC.



Skate SSN-578

1958 (7/30 - 9/22)  
Halfbeak SS-352  
Ice Station Alpha (8/14)

Yes (8/12, 8/17)

1. New York mc 8/25/58
2. New York mc 8/24, 25/58
3. New York mc 8/26/58
4. New York duplex 8/26/58
5. Bergen 8/24/58
6. APO 85 8/26/58 (Oslo)
7. APO 230 9/2/58 (Paris)
8. New London 8/28/58
9. 3L RS (30 Jul- 23 Sep)
10. 4L RS (Bogus, done after return) map
11. APO 731 9/24/58 (Fairbanks AK) RSC Polar Cruise & Ice Skate

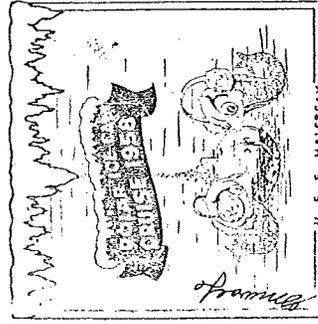
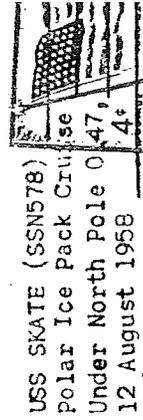
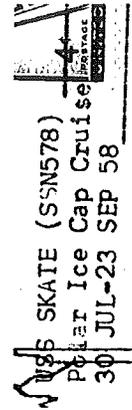
Skate departed New London, reached NP Aug 12 passed under, circled but did not surface, then headed for rendezvous w/Ice Station Alpha. Exchanged visits and mail. Returned to NP Aug 17 surfacing about 40 miles away; completed cruise at Bergen, Norway, then visited Oslo and ports in France, the Netherlands and Belgium before returning to Boston arriving Sep 22.

#2: approx 100 Ice Station Alpha covers carried in Skate, carried w/crew mail to NY; #3 Ice Sta Alpha cover posted at Bergen; #11 is Skate mail left with Ice Station Alpha (qty unknown)

Halfbeak

11. New York mc 8/25/58
12. New London or Fulton 9/22/58

- RSC Polar Ice Cap Cruise (var)
- RSC Polar Ice Cap Cruise (var)



Skate SSN-578

1959 (3/3 - 4/7)

Yes (3/17)

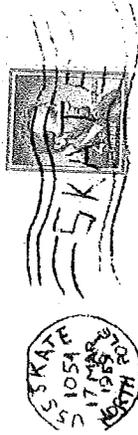
1. Ty F 3/17 North Pole

Polar Cruise Winter 59

2. Fulton T-2 4/9 (Return)

OSC

Departed New London, made first surfacing at North Pole where held memorial service for Hubert Wilkins at Pole and scattered his ashes as he had requested. Returned New London w/o port visits.



Sargo SSN-583

1960 (1/18 - 3/3)

Yes (2/9)

1. Ty F 2/9/60 (6 diff devices used)

Sargo 583/North Pole

2. Same

Sargo 583/Arctic Exploration

3. Ty 2 2/3 & 27/60

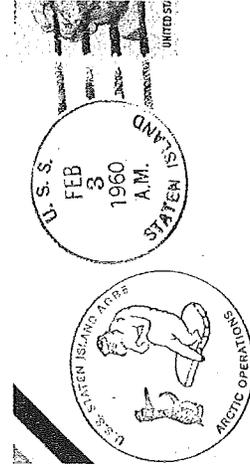
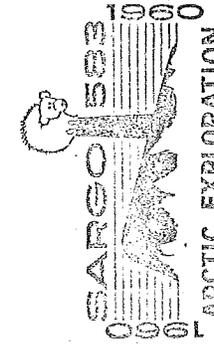
CGC Staten Island AGB-5

RS Circular Staten Is Arctic Ops & 4 line Arctic Ops Winter 59-60

Ice Island T-3

none

Sargo departed Pearl Harbor Jan 18, made rendezvous w/Staten Island on Jan 25 and Feb 24; visited Ice Island T-3 Feb 17 and conducted tests. Voyage was advertised in advance; over 15,000 covers serviced while surfaced at NP. Ship was authorized one day post office; three sets of cancels (two cancelers per set) issued, identifiable by location of positions of various letters. Sargo had two similar but different cachets, #1 is common while #2 has only one example reported. Sargo returned to Pearl Harbor after operation.



USS STATEN ISLAND (AGB-5) - USS 58300 (1959-1960) ICE BREAKER - ARCTIC EXPLORATION - WINTER 1959 - 60

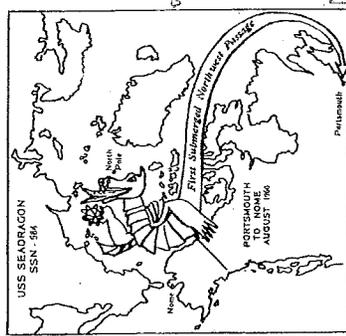
Seadragon SSN-584 1960 (8/1 - 9/14)  
Resolute, Cornwallis Is.

Yes (8/25)

- 1. Portsmouth NH hc 8/1/60 (depart) Circular RSC First Polar Transit
- 2. Nome AK 9/5/60 duplex Same
- 3. Nome AK mc 9/5/60 Same
- 4. Nome 9/5/60 duplex Square map type & circular RSC
- 5. USN Br 17012 (PH TH) 9/14/60 Circular RSC

#2 small number of covers exist w/ typed msg: Dive beneath iceberg; at North Magnetic Pole; baseball game at NP (no postmark)

Seadragon departed Portsmouth, NH to transfer to Pearl Harbor via Northwest Passage. Visited Canadian Weather Station in Barrow Strait Aug 16; mail was taken off to be held for one week. Attempted to visit Ice Island T-3, but could get only a few miles from station. Moored alongside icebreaker Northwind WAGB-282 at Nome, AK where transit covers were serviced. Voyage advertised over 15,000 covers serviced; small no. covers w/dual Portsmouth-Nome postmarks; voyage ended at Pearl Harbor Sep 14.



FIRST SUBMERGED  
NORTHWEST PASSAGE

Skate SSN-578

1962 (3/3)

No

none

none

Entemedor SS-340

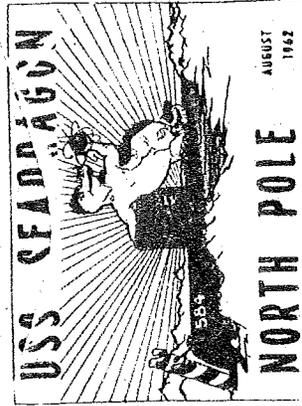
Tusk SS-426

Burton Island WAGB-283

Sublcex 1-62 in Cabot Strait north of Nova Scotia to test sonar and torpedo performance in Arctic environment

|                   |                        |           |                                   |                           |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Skate SSN-578     | 1962 (7/7 - 8/28)      | Yes (8/2) | 1. USN Br 13608 mc 8/22 (Adak AK) | RSC First Rdvu @ Pole etc |
| Seadragon SSN-584 | 1962 (7/12 - 9/14)     | Yes (8/2) | 1a. Same                          | Same + Seadragon/NP       |
| Ice Island T-3    | Burton Island WAGB-283 |           | 2. New London 8/28 mc (Skate)     | Same                      |
|                   |                        |           | 3. Fulton T-2 8/29 (Skate)        | Same                      |
|                   |                        |           | 4. Burton Island T-2(n+)          | Square SubIceEx 1962      |
|                   |                        |           | 5. Honolulu 9/19 & Barrow 10/31   | Seadragon OSC             |
|                   |                        |           | (Ice Island associated)           |                           |

SubIce 2-62; Skate from New London, Seadragon from Pearl Harbor made first submerged rendezvous Jul 31 then surfaced at the Pole. Seadragon visited Ice Island T-3 Jul 24, no cover exchange. After NP visit, both subs made rendezvous w/Burton Island on Aug 7 for torpedo trials. Most Skate polar covers transferred to Seadragon for Adak postmark; covers positively identified by ship with CO, sender corner card or OSC on reverse. Circular RSC rendezvous cachet found in both magenta and black on Skate covers, possibly only in magenta on Seadragon covers. Numerous Skate covers w/RSC rdvu cachet and Fulton dates into September; these are favor covers, not carried.



|                   |                   |    |      |      |
|-------------------|-------------------|----|------|------|
| Queenfish SSN-651 | 1967 (1/30 - Feb) | No | none | none |
|-------------------|-------------------|----|------|------|

First SSN 637 class to conduct under ice operations in Baffin Bay/Davis Strait; tested new sonar system.

Whale SSN-638

1969 (3/18 - ?)

Yes (4/6)

Ty 2(n) 4/6/69

Pargo SSN-650  
Skate SSN-578  
Ice Island T-3

Whale departed Charleston, SC for ops w/Pargo; surfaced at Ice Island T-3 Apr 3 for sound tests of Ice Island T-3 hydrophones; rendezvous w/Skate Apr 15 for sonar and torpedo exercises. One day PO authorized; approx 1,200 covers serviced on 60th anniversary of NP attainment by polar explorer Robert E. Peary. Cachet design by CO, CDR Wm. W. Wolff, Jr.

Pargo SSN-650

1969 (3/24 - 5/17)

Yes (4/26)

1. Ty F 4/26/69

Whale SSN-638  
Skate SSN-578

2. Same

Stencil world + 60 years since man first set foot on the North Pole

Pargo departed New London, CT for ops w/Whale; during operation received authorization to visit NP; prepared mimeo cachet and fabricated type F cancel on board using portions of two OSC rubber stamps. After return sent approx 100+ covers with printed cachet (smaller in size than mimeo cachet) and same type F cancel to list of govt officials provided by Adm Rickover.

Skate SSN-578

1969 (Mar-Apr)

No

1. Helensburgh 4/29/69

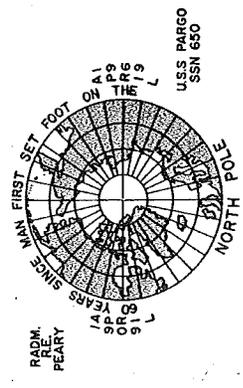
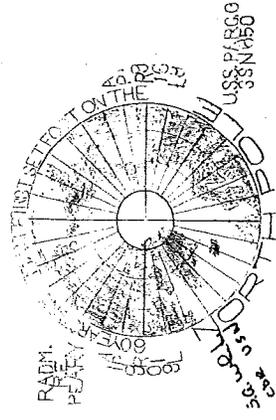
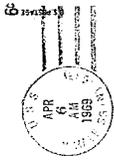
Whale SSN-638  
Pargo SSN-650

2. Groton mc 6/9/69

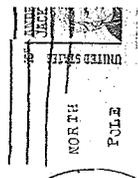
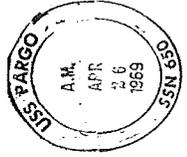
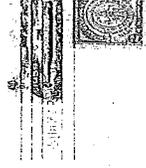
OSC  
Tenth Anniv/1959-Mar 17-1969  
Sub/Polar bear

Note inserted by Skate PAO in cover #2 indicates covers were carried on voyage, but not posted until some time after return

Wm. W. Wolff, Jr. CO, CDR, USN



TENTH ANNIVERSARY 1959 - MARCH 17 - 1969



FIRST SUBMARINE TO SURFACE AT THE NORTH POLE

Queenfish SSN-651 1970 (7/6 - Aug)

Yes (8/5)

1. Ty F 8/5/70

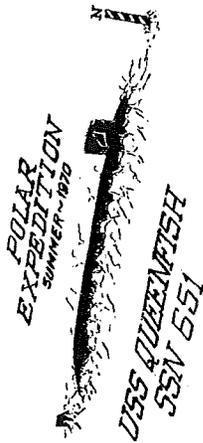
Stencil - Polar Expedition  
w/three variants

2. Ty F 8/5/70 variety

Same

Queenfish departed Pearl Harbor, followed track of Nautilus; made 24 surfacings in ice. On Aug 5, surfaced within 500 yards of NP, 12 years to the day after Nautilus made first submarine visit.

Two wood block cancels made on board by seaman Casparzak who also designed commemorative cachet. Both cancels and the three mimeo cachet have identifiable differences; combinations of each cancel and variant cachets exist; an estimated 2,000 covers were processed while surfaced at NP.



Hammerhead  
SSN-663

1970 (10/12 - Dec)

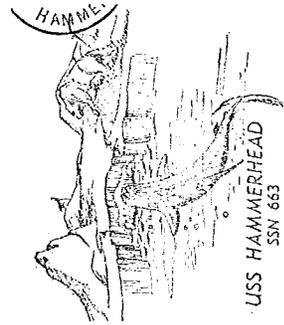
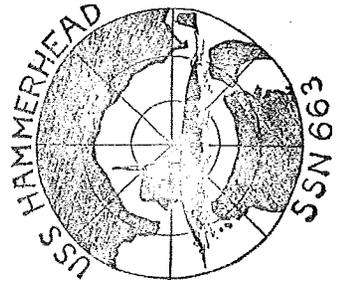
Yes (11/20)

Ty 2(n+) 11/20/70

(1) Globe/ship & RS NP/ Nov 70  
(2) Shark in ice, RS NP/ Nov 70  
Both exist with NP in arc over stamp

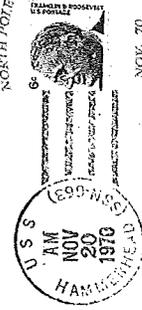
Northwind WAGB-282

Hammerhead left Norfolk for SubIceX 2-70 with Skate during which Hammerhead made a record number of surfacings through ice including one at the NP. Northwind's role apparently that of a support ship for the operation. Two different RS cachets were used, both designed by crew member ET2 Searfoss. Ship authorized a 4 bar hand cancel by USPS. Approx 1,200 covers cancelled while surfaced at NP.



NORTH POLE

NOV. 70



**Skate SSN-578** 1970 (Nov-Dec) No none  
 Hammerhead SSN-663  
 Northwind WAGB-282

SubIcex 2-70; war fighting ops in Davis Strait. Neither Northwind or Skate issued commemorative covers.

**Trepang SSN-674** 1971 (2/16 - 3.27) No Canopus Ty 7 3/27/71 OSC  
 Skate SSN-578  
 Edisto AGB-2

**Skate SSN-578** 1971 (2/16 - 4/6) No Groton mc 4/6/71 OSC  
 Trepang SSN-674  
 Edisto AGB-2

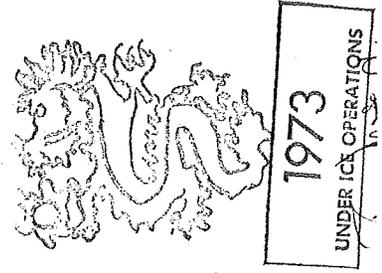
Trepang and Skate departed New London for SubIcex 1-71 for a polar operation off Iceland in the Denmark Strait and Greenland Sea supported by CGC Edisto. Both submarines visited Holy Loch, Scotland before returning to New London.

**Hawkbill SSN-666** 1973 (Mar - Apr) No 1. Dixon Ty 2n+ 4/16/73 RSC Hawkbill under Ice 1973  
 Seadragon SSN-584 2. USPS CA 920 mc 4/18/73 Same  
 Staten Island AGB-5

Hawkbill departed San Diego to conduct joint torpedo operations with Seadragon under the Bering Sea ice pack for SubIcex 1-73 with support by CGC Staten Island. A RS cachet designed by one of Hawkbill's officers and made in San Diego before departure was applied to covers during the operation and cancelled on return.

**Seadragon SSN-584** 1973 (Mar - Apr) No USPS 945 mc 4/9/73 (San Fran) RSC Seadragon 1973/ Under Ice  
 Hawkbill SSN-666 USPS 967 mc 4/16/73 (PHTH) Operations  
 Staten Island AGB-5

For SubIcex 1-73 Seadragon prepared a special RS cachet; posted covers in San Francisco during a port visit and in Pearl Harbor on return.



Bluefish SSN-675 1975 (3/17 - 5/24)

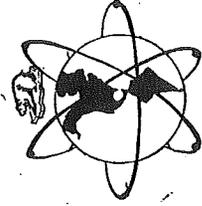
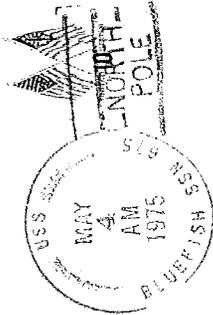
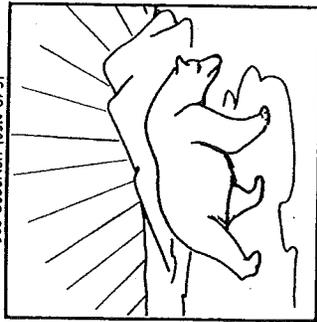
Yes (5/4)

Ty F 5/4/75

- 1. Pr square w/polar bear
- 2. Pr Polar Operations
- 3. OSC

Bluefish departed Norfolk for SubIcex 1-75 in Greenland and Barents Seas to evaluate equipment, collect bathymetric data and maintain submarine expertise in Arctic operations. Ship visited NP where held ceremony to scattered ashes of Lady Suzanne Wilkins, widow of Arctic explorer Sir Hubert Wilkins. Awarded a Navy Unit Commendation. Authorized a one day post office by USPS, last submarine so authorized. Approx 2,500 covers w/ #1 cachet serviced, 208 covers w/ #2 cachet and approx 100 w/ #3 cachet. Cachet #2 designed by USCS member Paul White with service arranged by USCS member Capt R.D. Rawlins USN.

USS BLUEFISH (SSN 675)



### POLAR OPERATIONS

Gurnard SSN-662 1976 (3/8 - 5/8)

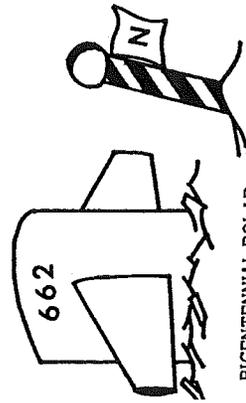
Yes (4/14)

1. Dixon Ty 2 (n+) 5/11, 12, 13/76

Sub at Pole w/Bi-Centennial  
Polar  
Expedition - 1976  
OSC

2. Same but 5/12 or 13/76

Gurnard departed from San Diego March 8 for SubIcex 1-76, a two month scientific voyage in the Arctic. A cachet for the trip was printed in advance on #10 envelopes and a two line RS added with the date of surfacing at the NP. Approx 500 official covers were serviced for this op. Gurnard returned May 8 but the covers were not posted on board Dixon until the following week over a three day period.



BICENTENNIAL POLAR EXPEDITION - 1976

NORTH POLE  
14 APRIL 1976

**Flying Fish SSN-673** 1977 (3/26 - 6/6)  
Fletcher's Ice Island

Yes (4/30)

1. Halifax, Canada mute

2. Halifax, Canada mute

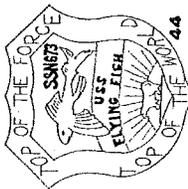
3. Norfolk, VA mc 6/14/77

4. Barrow, AK 6/7/77

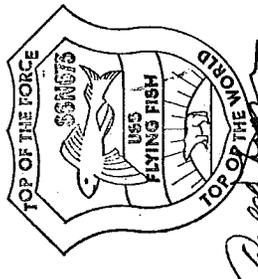
5. USS Dupont Ty 2(n+) 6/6/77

Underway from Norfolk, VA for Sublcex 1-77, Flying Fish surfaced for 12 hours at NP for ceremonies and gathering scientific data, 10<sup>th</sup> sub to surface at NP. Ship visited Halifax, Nova Scotia, on return where mail was sent ashore. However, mail carried U.S. franking, so could not be legally postmarked. Some of this mail did not reach its destination. Flying Fish returned to Norfolk, June 6. #4 is ship mail left at Fletcher's Ice Island for return to States.

30 APR 1977



Printed (small)

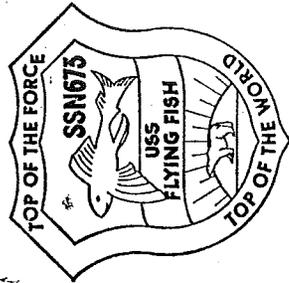


Rubber stamp

**Pintado SSN-672** 1978 (9/12 - 11/16)

Yes (10/10)

Northwind WAGB-282



Printed

1. San Diego CA mc 11/16/78

2. Same

3. Same

4. Northwind Ty 2 (n+) 10/22/78

5. Same

RS, Top of the Force/Top of the World

pr, Top of World/Polar Ops

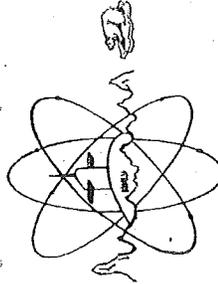
Official w/ smaller printed cachet

RS as in #1

Welcome Home + RS as in #1

Underway from Norfolk, VA for Sublcex 1-77, Flying Fish surfaced for 12 hours at NP for ceremonies and gathering scientific data, 10<sup>th</sup> sub to surface at NP. Ship visited Halifax, Nova Scotia, on return where mail was sent ashore. However, mail carried U.S. franking, so could not be legally postmarked. Some of this mail did not reach its destination. Flying Fish returned to Norfolk, June 6. #4 is ship mail left at Fletcher's Ice Island for return to States.

Top Of The World



Polar Operations

#10, pr 2 line & RS Pintado at the

Pole + North Pole 10 Oct 1978

RS Pintado at the Pole + NP RS

Pr Top of the World + as #2

Arctic West Summer w/notes on reverse (6 covers)

RS data log w/notations (4 covers)

For Sublcex 1-78, Pintado surveyed McClintock channel and operated with CGC Northwind, transferring personnel by helo between the two ships. #1 approx 1,500 covers. Various Northwind covers exist w/different dates for other of her operations

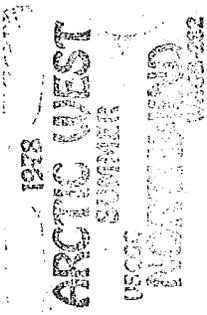


PINTADO AT THE POLE



### PINTADO POLAR EXPEDITION - 1978

NORTH POLE  
10 OCT 1978



Archerfish SSN 678 1979 (3/14-6/6)  
HMS Sovereign

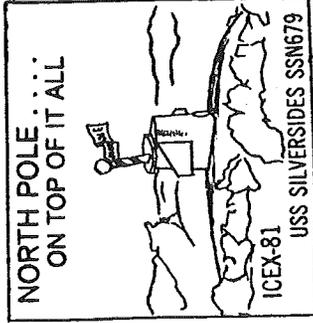
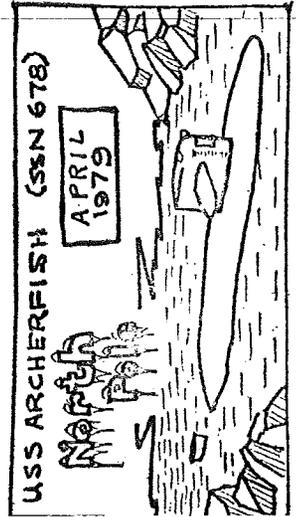
Yes (4/21)

1. APO 09510 (London) mc 5/14/79

Rectangular RSC w/ USS Archerfish (SSN 678)/ April 1979

- 2. Plymouth, Eng none or 5/17/79 mc Same Monarch official
- 3. Plymouth, Eng 5/11/79 mc (depart) Same
- 4. Groton Subase hc 6/5/79 (return) Same

Archerfish departed New London March 14 for SubIceX 1-79; conducted a series of torpedo test firings east of Greenland with support of Canadian helos; cruised under ice 41 days conducting an extensive scientific survey package, surfaced once at NP, then classified operations with HMS Sovereign in the Arctic. Upon completion Archerfish visited Plymouth, England May 11-19, then Zeebrugge, Belgium May 22 - 25 before returning to New London June 4. Cachet designed by ship's officer Lt(jg) K. W. Comer and RS prepared in Groton before departing. Approx 600 official monarch envelopes mailed at Plymouth (#3) but most not postmarked due to official US franking. An estimated 200-300 covers (#1 or #3) were serviced. Ship received a Navy Unit Commendation for the voyage.



Silversides following page

Dater is separate RS

11 OCT 1981

|                            |                    |             |  |   |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------|--|---|
| <b>Silversides SSN-679</b> | 1981 (9/9 - 11/30) | Yes (10/11) | 1. Haakonsværn or Bergen Norway<br>hc 11/20/81 | square RS NP, On Top of it All<br>Icex-81 |
|                            | HMS Valient        |             | 2. Holland Ty 2(n) 11/27/81                    | Same                                      |
|                            |                    |             | 3. None  | Same, Official monarch, 11 Oct<br>81      |

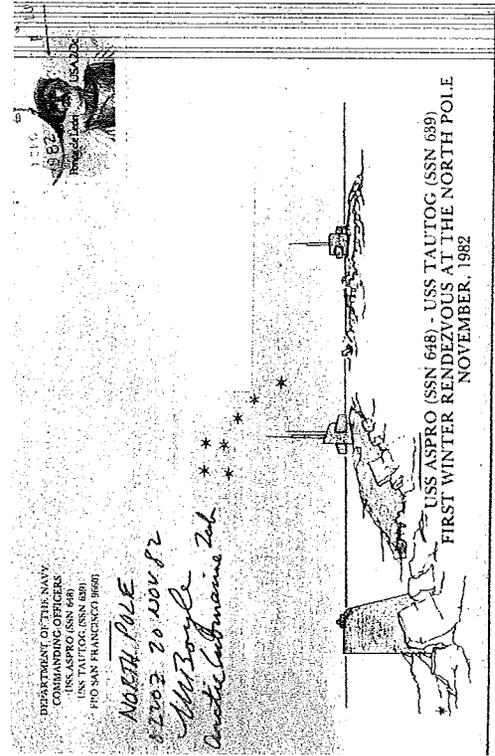
Silversides sailed from Norfolk to participate in a combined US-UK operation also involving CGC Northwind, then continued under the ice cap for SubIcex 1-81 for a total of 54 days during which she surfaced at the NP. Following the operation, she visited Haakonsværn, Norway Nov 19-23 then Holy Lock, Scotland Nov 27<sup>th</sup> before returning to Norfolk. The ship attempted to mail her monarch covers in Haakonsværn but Norwegian postal officials demurred; approx 400 official envelopes processed by USS Holland at Holy Lock. Since these had a penalty indicia, they received no postmark. However, an unknown quantity of crew and collector mail did receive a postmark.

**Spadefish SSN-668** 1982 (Mar - July) Yes none  
Unspecified Arctic operations, probably classified; awarded Navy Unit Commendation

**Aspro SSN-648** 1982 (10/15 - 12/15) Yes (11/20) 1. Honolulu mc 12/20/82 Monarch official, pr & hand color

**Tautog SSN-639** 1982 (10/14 - 12/15) Yes (11/20) 1. Same Same

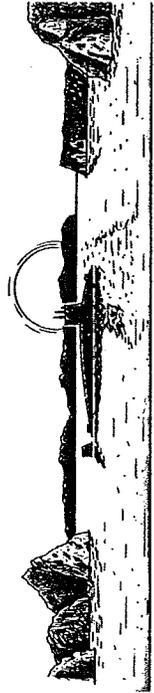
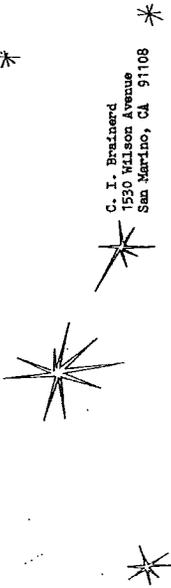
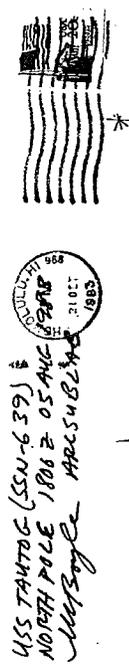
Aspro and Tautog sailed from Pearl Harbor to conduct PacSubIcex 1-82, spending 40 days north of Arctic circle under ice. The ships made the first winter rendezvous at the NP and surfaced Nov 20. Commemorative envelopes are unique, designed by QMC (SS) Russell B. Starr, they were color washed by Starr and ET1 Randy Reynolds, both of Aspro after the ships returned to port. Approx 2500 covers with enclosure letter of greetings were cancelled at Honolulu Dec 20 after background color applied.



**Whale SSN-638** 1982 (Fall) ? T-2z FPO 09510 (London) 11/12/82 OSC (4 covers known)  
 Unspecified classified Arctic operations; no information whether surfaced at the NP. Visited a port in England after the op.

**L. Mendel Rivers SSN-686** 1983 (Aug - Sep) No none  
 Unspecified classified Arctic operations.

**Tautog SSN-639** 1983 (Jul - Aug) Yes (8/5) 1. Honolulu mc 10/21/83 pr monarch (sub & icebergs)  
 2. Honolulu mc 10/22,23, 24/83 OSC  
 Tautog returned to the Arctic for PacSubIcex 1-83; surfaced at NP 25 years to day of first visit by USS NAUTILUS. Third sub to surface twice at NP. Ship printed all over cacheted cover (#1) enclosed a letter of greeting dated Aug 5, mailed on return to Pearl Harbor, quantity unknown.



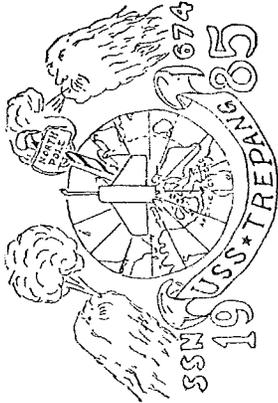
**Sunfish SSN-649** 1984 (Feb - Apr) -- none  
 Unspecified classified Arctic operations.

**Spadefish SSN-668** 1984 (Aug - Oct) -- none  
 Unspecified Arctic operations, probably classified.

|                        |   |             |   |   |
|------------------------|---|-------------|---|---|
| <b>Gurnard SSN-662</b> | 1984 (9/17 - 11/30)<br>Pintado SSN-672<br>Polar Sea WAGB-11 | Yes (11/12) | 1. Ty F 966666-2342<br>2. Same                    | Pr monarch, Gurnard - Pintado<br>Rendezvous @ NP hand tinted<br>OSC |
| <b>Pintado SSN-672</b> | 1984 (9/18 - 11/30)<br>Gurnard SSN-662<br>Polar Sea WAGB-11 | Yes (11/12) | 1. Ty F 96678-2352<br>2. San Diego CA mc 12/11/84 | As Gurnard #1<br>OSC  |

Both submarines departed San Diego for PacSubIcex 1-84, made rendezvous in the Beaufort Sea with CGC Polar Sea and an Ice Camp. After about five weeks of operations, the two subs proceeded to the NP where they surfaced approximately 500 yards apart, the second time at the NP for each submarine. Gurnard remained surfaced for 36 hours, Pintado for 72 hours. In all, the two subs operated together for 75 days, 45 days under ice. A joint cacheted monarch sized cover was produced for the operation. An earlier design was misplaced in the print shop of USS McKEE and the design used in 1982 by Aspro/Tautog was slightly modified and covers printed. Approximately 900 covers were postmarked, 300 to each crew and 150 official mailings from each ship. The rubber stamp pictorial postmarks were manufactured on board McKee, identifiable to each ship by the zip code. The date was applied by a separate dater rubber stamp. Some #10 size voyage covers are known from Gurnard with OSC.

COMMANDING OFFICERS  
USS GURNARD (SSN 662)  
USS PINTADO (SSN 672)  
PO SAN FRANCISCO, 94601



|                        |                   |           |                                  |   |
|------------------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Trepang SSN-674</b> | 1985 (Mar - 6/28) | Yes (5/3) | Ty F 5/3/85<br>Ty 2-1(n) 7/23/85 | Sub at NP, Arctic winds blowing<br>Same |
|------------------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|---|

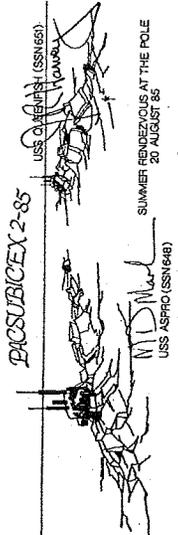
Trepang departed New London to conduct unspecified Arctic operations for Iceex 1-85. Trepang visited ice camp Opal April 15 where Adm Watkins, CNO, and others embarked for eight hours of under ice ops; ship returned to New London June 28. Cachet was designed by crew member STS2(SS) Phil Grant, the fancy postmark by Lt Somnitz, PAO. Date applied by rubber stamp dater. Approximately 2,100 covers sent to navy and government officials and other dignitaries. The type 2-1 cancel was apparently obtained from USPS and is much scarcer than the fancy cancel.

**Sea Devil SSN-664** 1985 (May - Aug) Yes (6/6) Frank Cable Ty 2(n) 8/15/85 OSC + hand ICEX '85  
 Sea Devil departed Charleston, SC in May 1985 to conduct unspecified Arctic operations probably of a classified nature. She reportedly surfaced at the NP then visited Kiel, Germany about July 15 and possibly Zeebrugge, Belgium before returning to Charleston. Six covers reportedly were serviced.

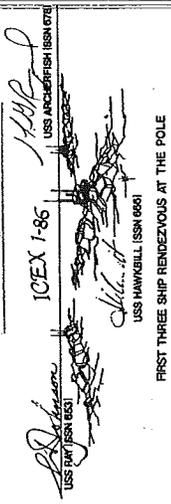
**Aspro SSN-648** 1985 (Jul - Sep) Yes (8/20) 1. Honolulu mc 12/2/85 Pr monarch, two subs, hand tint  
 Queenfish SSN-651 Queenfish SSN-651 OSC w/NP notation  
 2. San Diego mc 2/13/86 Pr monarch error PacSubEx 1-85  
 3. None OSC w/NP notation  
 none

**Queenfish SSN-651** 1985 (Jul - Sep) Yes (8/20) Aspro SSN-648  
 Aspro departed San Diego and Queenfish left Pearl Harbor for PacSubIcex 2-85, both surfacing at the NP August 20, the fourth dual submarine surfacing at NP. A joint printed monarch envelope was prepared with a letter enclosed signed by both COs. The covers were hand tinted after Queenfish returned to Pearl Harbor and mailed at the Submarine Base December 2. Collector mail is known from both ships serviced with OSC; however, the Queenfish covers did not receive a postmark. The Aspro covers were mailed several months after return.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
 COMMANDING OFFICERS  
 USS ASPRO (SSN 648)  
 770 SAN FRANCISCO PALAU



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
 COMMANDING OFFICERS  
 USS RAY (SSN 666)  
 USS ARCHERFISH (SSN 678)  
 USS HAWKBILL (SSN 676)  
 OFFICIAL BUSINESS  
 PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300



**Ray SSN-653** 1986 (Mar - 6/14) Yes (5/6) 1. None Pr monarch subs@ NP; Icx 1-86  
 Hawkbill SSN-666 Ty F 5/6/85 RS blue Icx 1-86/USS Ray  
 Archerfish SSN-678 3. San Diego 6/9/85 Same but black w/ NP notation  
 Ice Station  
**Hawkbill SSN-666** 1986 (Mar - May) Yes (5/6) 1. Honolulu mc 6/25/86 Pr monarch subs@ NP; Icx 1-86  
 Ray SSN-653 2. Honolulu mc 5/28/86 OSC w/notation  
 Archerfish SSN-678  
 Ice Station

**Archerfish SSN-678** 1986 (Mar - 6/1)  
 Ray SSN-653  
 Hawkbill SSN-666

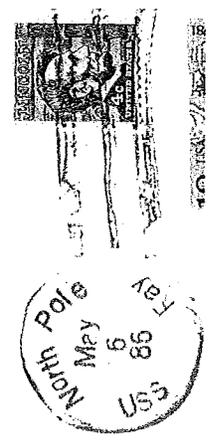
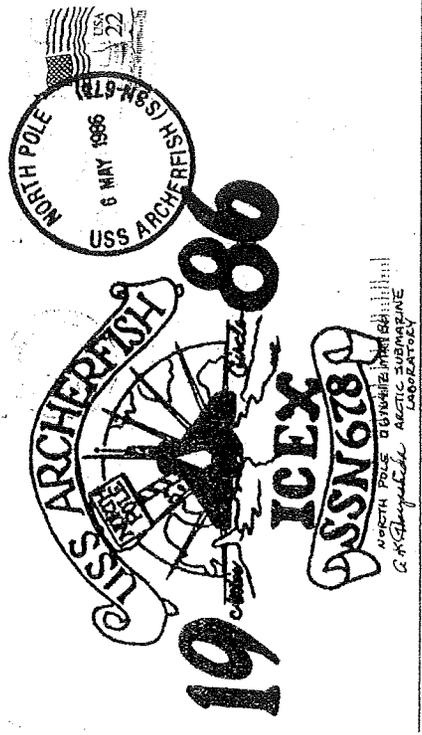
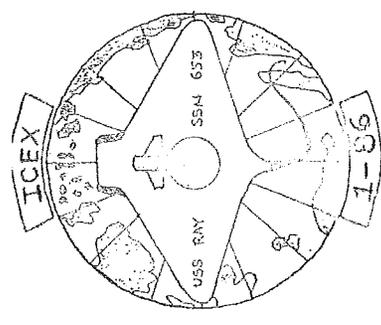
Yes (5/6)

1. None
2. Ty F 5/6/86
3. Fulton Ty 2t(n) 6/1/86 (return)

Pr monarch subs@NP; Icex 1-86  
 RS Archerfish Icex 1986  
 Ch #4 blue w/ASL logo & notation  
 Ch #4 in red

Ray, Archerfish and Hawkbill sailed independently from Charleston, SC, New London, CT and Pearl Harbor respectively for Icex 1-86. Ray and Hawkbill rendezvoused at ice station 100 miles north of Pt. Barrow for torpedo firing trials. All three submarines surfaced at the NP May 6, the first three ship surfacing at the NP. Following the operation, Ray visited Holy Loch for repairs and Portsmouth, England before returning to Charleston SC.

A monarch cover was prepared for the operation with enclosed letter signed by all three COs with an estimated 2,500 monarch covers mailed. Hawkbill covers were postmarked in Honolulu June 25. Since the covers had a penalty indicia, many were not postmarked so a cover cannot be ascribed to either Ray or Hawkbill without a signed corner card. Ray produced a rubber stamp cachet and fancy cancel for the operation (both in blue) with a black cachet used on covers mailed in San Diego on return. Archerfish produced a rubber stamp cachet and fancy cancel for the operation with NP date added with a RS dater. Hawkbill mailed collector covers with OSC on return to port.



|                               |                         |            |                                 |                              |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Seahorse SSN 669</b>       | 1986                    | Yes (8/9)  | None                            | None                         |
| Unspecified Arctic operations |                         |            |                                 |                              |
| <b>Finback SSN 670</b>        | 1986                    | No         | None                            | None                         |
| Unspecified Arctic operations |                         |            |                                 |                              |
| <b>Billfish SSN-676</b>       | 1987 (Apr - Jun)        | Yes (5/18) | 1. ?                            | #10 pr North Pole Rendezvous |
|                               | Sea Devil SSN-664       |            | 2. San Diego CA mc 7/1/87       | ship seal imprint w/notation |
|                               | HMS Superb              |            | 3. Fulton Ty 2t(n) (return)     | pr Ch #4 in blue             |
|                               | Ice Station Crystal (?) |            |                                 |                              |
| <b>Sea Devil SSN-664</b>      | 1987 (Apr - Jun)        | Yes (5/18) | 1. As 1 above                   | as 1 above                   |
|                               | Billfish SSN-676        |            | 2. Simon Lake Ty 2-1(n+) 7/4/87 | ship seal imprint w/notation |
|                               | HMS Superb              |            |                                 |                              |

Billfish departed New London for Iceex 1-87 to operate under ice cap for a record of 67 days. Sea Devil departed Charleston, SC, made a rendezvous with Sea Devil and Superb at NP where all three surfaced, the third triple surfacing at the NP, and first involving a British submarine. Sea Devil visited Holy Loch, Scotland following the operation. Billfish prepared a printed cover for the operation

COMMANDING OFFICER  
 USS BILLFISH (SSN-676)  
 FPO NEW YORK, NEW YORK  
 09565-2356

USS BILLFISH



NORTH POLE RENDEZVOU

SSN 676

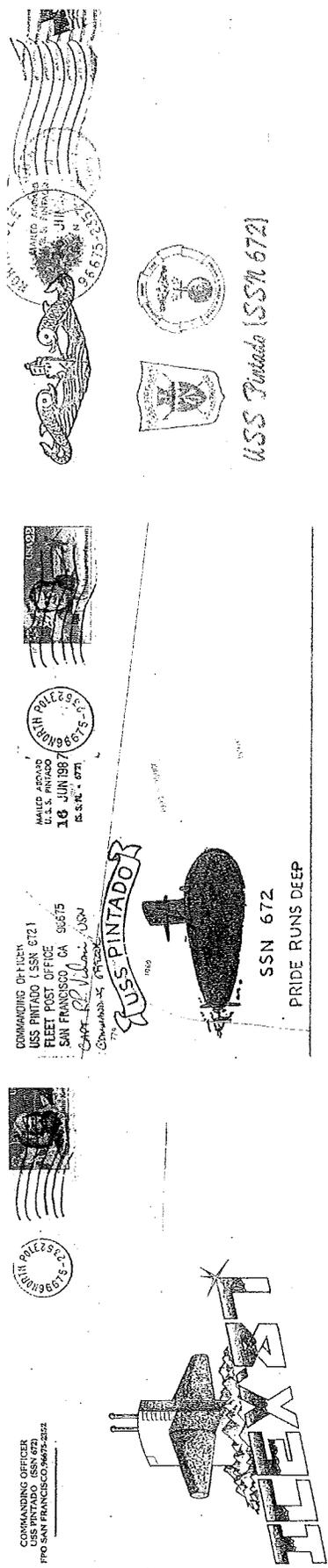
\* USS BILLFISH (SSN 676) \* HMS SUPERB (S 109) \* USS SEA DEVIL (SSN 664)

|                        |                    |            |   |  |
|------------------------|--------------------|------------|---|--|
| <b>Pintado SSN-672</b> | 1987 (Late Spring) | Yes (6/16) | 1. Small T-F North Pole (96675-2352) & 4 line "Mailed Aboard etc" | a. pr monarch Iceex '87<br>b. RSC w/2 mini RSC<br>c. RSC (sub) & mini OSC<br>d. 4 diff env by Bruce Speed as a above |
|                        |                    |            | 2. As above w/ no data  |  |
|                        |                    |            | 3. Large Ty F North Pole/96675-2352                               | RSC w/2 mini OSC   |

W/ separate dater 16 Jun 1987

3. Honolulu mc 8/8/87 OSC w/ NP notation

Pintado departed San Diego in April 1987 for her third trip under ice, steaming over 18,000 miles in 48 days under the ice cap. A printed cachet was prepared on a monarch cover, with letter enclosed, with a fancy rubber stamp cancel and a four line date. A second North Pole fancy cancel was used on some covers. A variety of cacheted covers with one of the fancy cancels are known.



L. Mendel Rivers 1987 (Fall)  
SSN 686

Unspecified Arctic operations.

Lapon SSN 661 1988 (?)  
Unspecified Arctic operations

Archerfish SSN-678 1988 (Spring)  
HMS Superb  
HMS Turbulent

Archerfish departed New London for LantSubIcex 2-88 to test communications capabilities in Arctic waters. She surfaced at the NP for four hours. She modified her 1986 Icex cachet for use with the same fancy postmark. Reports that she surfaced with HMS Superb and Turbulent have not been definitely confirmed.

Yes (9/13) None

No None

Yes (5/26, 27) Ty F 5/26 & 5/27 1988  
Ty F undated

RS Icex (1986 w/o date)  
Wentworth

None

None

USS Pintado (SSN 672)

**Queenfish SSN-651** 1988 Yes (7/20 - Aug) Yes (8/20) NonE None --  
 Departed Pearl Harbor following route taken by Nautilus SSN-571 surfaced at NP Aug 3 celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nautilus polar visit. After spending nine days under ice, she departed for a port visit to Holy Loch, Scotland, for four days, then returned via Arctic to Pearl Harbor. No covers reported.

**Sturgeon SSN-637** 1989 (Spring) No Frank Cable Ty 2-1(n+) 6/13/89 RSC Icex 1-89 + circular Aboard Sturgeon + label  
 Sturgeon departed Charleston, SC in March to collect data in the Arctic environment. She visited an ice camp to embark a Congressional delegation escorted by Adm Bruce Demars who headed the Navy nuclear power branch. Cachet designed by LCDR Henry Gonzales, ship Weapons Officer; labels were designed by his father, Henry Gonzales, Sr. Of El Paso, TX. 292 covers were produced.



**Silversides SSN-679** 1989 (8/25 - Nov) Yes --  
 Departed Norfolk for Arctic ops, surfaced at the NP, continued to Hawaii and returned to Norfolk via Panama Canal, a 20,500 mile circumnavigation of North America, a submarine first.

**Augusta SSN 710** 1989 No None  
 Unspecified Arctic operations

**Seahorse SSN-669** 1990 (2/21 - Jun) Yes (4/18) 1. Frank Cable Ty 2-1(n+) 10/5/90 monarch pr 'East meets West Spring 1990"  
 Gurnard SSN-662 2. Santa Ana mc 7/7/90 OSC  
 Ice camp APLIS 3. Frank Cable Ty 2-1 9/18/90 RS Seahorse Arriving Icex 1-90

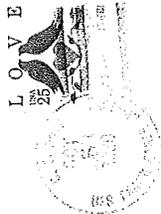
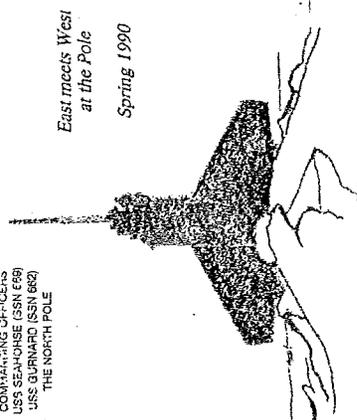
Seahorse departed Charleston, SC for Icex 1-90 in the Arctic and joints ops with Gurnard. Surfaced at NP. Visited ice camp APLIS where embarked Representative Robert Dorman and Senator Albert Gore for 24 hours under ice. Apparently returned to Charleston via Panama

Canal. Prepared monarch RS cachet for joint ops. Later dates exist of cover #1. Santa Ana cancel from Arctic Sub Lab tech rep. #3 cover exists with many Oct & Nov dates probably favor cancels.

**Gurnard SSN-662** 1990 (Mar - Jun) Yes (4/18) 1. San Diego mc 7/26/90 Circular Gurnard North Pole  
Seahorse SSN 669  
Ice Camp APLIS

Gurnard deployed from San Diego, CA on IceX 1-90; visited Ice Camp APLIS, 120 miles north of Prudhoe Bay, AK where Secretary of the Navy embarked. Made rendezvous with Seahorse, surfaced at NP, returned to San Diego via Panama Canal, 3<sup>rd</sup> sub to circumnavigate North America.

COMMANING OFFICERS  
USS SEAHORSE (SSN 669)  
USS GURNARD (SSN 662)  
THE NORTH POLE



**SEAHORSE  
ARRIVING**



**Puffer SSN 652** 1990 (Fall)  
Unspecified Arctic operations

Yes (9/17) None

None

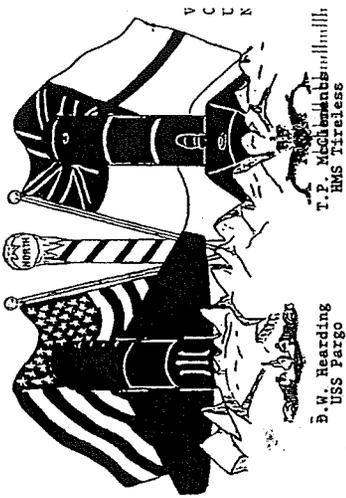
**Pargo SSN-650** 1991 (3/15 - 6/27)  
HMS Tireless  
Ice Station

1. Dixon Ty 2-1(n+) 7/8/91

pr monarch NP Rdvu 1991  
Pargo & Tireless  
2. San Diego mc 6/27/91 OSC & snowman

Pargo departed New London on IceX 91 for the Arctic, surfaced at Arctic Research camp to host a group w/ Adm DeMars, CSL for a cruise; made rendezvous w/Tireless, surfaced at NP; visited Adak, AK and Pearl Harbor before returning to New London via Panama Canal, 4<sup>th</sup> SSN to circumnavigate North America. Pargo prepared a printed cachet for joint NP rendezvous, no estimate of quantity.

North Pole Rendezvous 1991



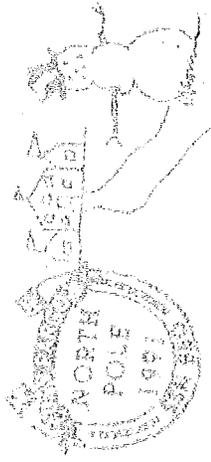
Aspro SSN 648 1991  
Tautog SSN 639

Submarines conducted unspecified Arctic Operations

No

None

None



Sea Horse SSN-669 1991 (spring) ?

1. Charleston hc 7/12/91

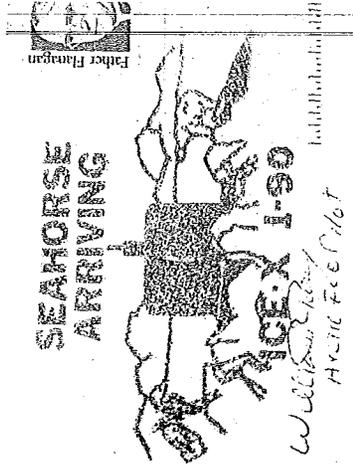
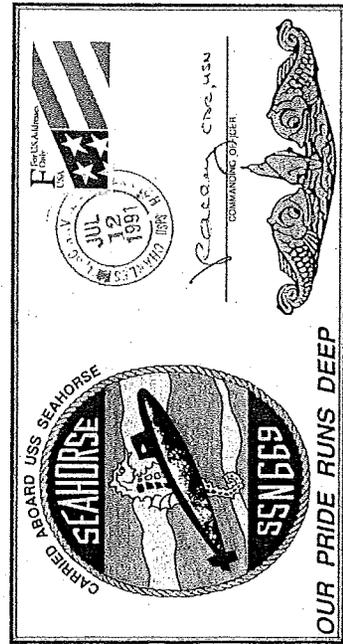
2. Frank Cable official 12/5/91

Carried aboard Seahorse

RS Iceex 1-90 "Seahorse

Arriving" w/Ice Pilot note

Seahorse returned to the Arctic for unspecified operations above the Arctic circle Note by ship's Navigator on reverse of #1 cover says "carried above the Arctic circle aboard USS Seahorse, Spring 1991." Ship reused the 1990 RS cachet without modification. Seahorse's use of the 1990 Arctic cachet for the 1991 operation present a confusing picture which is clarified by postmark date.



With late 1991 dates

**Grayling SSN-646** 1992 Mar - May Yes (4/16) Grayling Ty F 4/16/92 RS North Pole Station + OSC  
 Grayling departed San Diego for unspecified Arctic operations, surfacing at the NP. Carried covers had a "North Pole Station" RS applied.

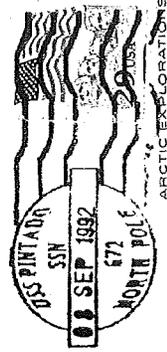
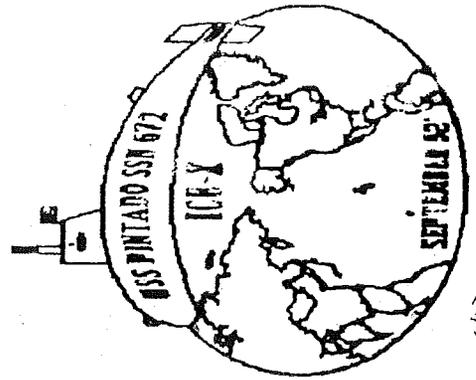


**Spadefish SSN-668** 1992 (Mar - Jun) Yes (5/7) San Diego mc 6/29/92 OSC w/NP notation  
 HMS Trenchant

Spade fish departed San Diego for unspecified Arctic operations with HMS Trenchant, both surfacing at the NP.

**Pintado SSN-672** 1992 (Fall) Yes (9/3) Ty F 9/3/92 & RS Pintado Iceex Sept 92  
 San Diego Jan 13, 1993

Pintado departed San Diego for her 4<sup>th</sup> Arctic cruise, completed her 1,000<sup>th</sup> dive and surfaced at NP. A cachet and fancy postmark were prepared using a dot matrix printer. The cachet was used for at least six months in different colors but without the fancy cancel.



**Albany SSN-753** 1992 (fall) No Hampton Rds mc 10/13/93 OSC w/NP under ice note  
Albany conducted the first under-ice operation by a SSN 688I (improved) class submarine, probably a classified operation..

**San Juan SSN-751** 1993 (Mar - May) No New Haven mc 6/29/93 OSC w/crew notation  
San Juan made an Arctic deployment until May 1993, the first improved 688 class to surface through the ice.

**Puffer SSN-652** 1993 (3/17 - 6/15) Yes (4/27) Ty F 4/27/93 & OSC w/NP notation  
San Juan SSN-751 San Diego 8/17/93

Puffer departed San Diego for Arctic, operated with San Juan, visited Faslane, Scotland, returned to San Diego via Panama Canal circumnavigating North America. Puffer prepared a fancy rubber stamp postmark and a two line RS noting NP surfacing.

### NORTH POLE SURFACING 27 APRIL 1993

**Pargo SSN-650** 1993 (8/11 - 11/19) Yes (9/12) San Diego mc 11/5/93 OSC w/NP notation  
Grotton Subase 11/19/93 (return) pr USCS Ch #4 cachet

Pargo deployed from San Diego to test the concept of conducting a scientific deployment with civilian scientists aboard; she spent 19 days in Arctic basin, surfaced 21 times through ice, visited Norway before returning to New London; cruise proved the concept of submarine voyage as Arctic research platform.

**Spadefish SSN 688** 1993 No None None  
Unspecified Arctic operations.

**Whale SSN-639** 1994 (3/16 - 7/8) Yes (4/16) San Diego Oct 27, 1994 OSC w/NP notation  
UK submarine  
Ice Camp Crystal

Whale departed New London for a multi-purpose operation involving a UK submarine and ice camp Crystal, north of Greenland. Whale surfaced at the NP April 16 for 18 hours. She visited Haakonsvem, Norway after cruise before returning to Subase, Grotton.

**Pargo SSN 650** 1994 No None None  
Unspecified Arctic operations.

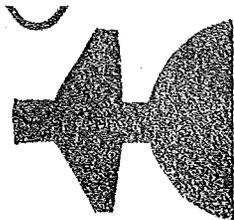
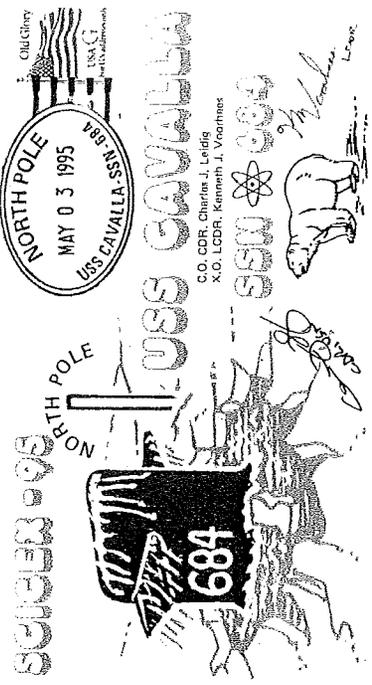
Cavalla SSN-684 1995 (3/7 - 6/8)

Yes (5/3)

- 1. Ty F North Pole 5/3/95
- 2. San Diego 6/5/95
- 3. Honolulu mc 6/13/95

pr SubIceX - 95 overall cachet  
 OSC w/3 line Scicex-95  
 OSC + ship & 4 line legend

Cavalla sailed from Pearl Harbor on the first of five annual Arctic cruise with civilian scientists on board; surfaced ten times during science cruise including at NP. Set an endurance record of 63 days under the ice pack. Visited Esquimalt, Canada on return. Awarded NUC for cruise. Cavalla prepared a RS cachet (#2) and a fancy postmark and also used ship OSC plus a four line RS on some covers. USCS member John Milewski donated covers with a printed cachet (#1).



SURFACED AT  
 NORTH POLE  
 SCICEX '95  
 3 MAY 1995



SCICEX-95 NORTH POLE  
 1027Z 3 MAY 1995  
*Paul K. Dangel*  
 NAVUNSEAWARSEN DET ASL

Sand Lance SSN-660 1996 (Jun - 8/19)

Yes (7/12)

- 1. Ty F 6/12/95

- a. Pr First North Pole Trip
- b. Same + ASL logo
- c. Pr USCS Chapter #4
- d. Pr USCS Ch #27

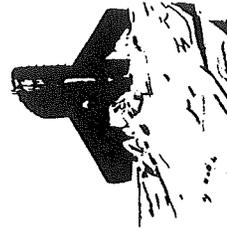
- 2, San Diego mc 11/19/95

OSC w/NP notation

Sand Lance departed New London for IceX 1996. She recorded 38 surfacings through ice with one at the NP on July 12. She used a fancy postmark with a RS dater to record the NP surfacing.



USS SAND LANCE (SSN 660)  
 First North Pole Trip



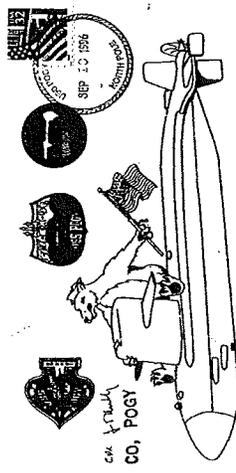
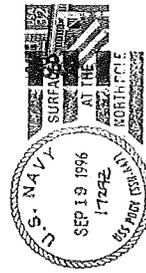
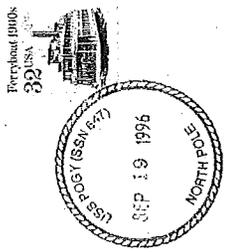
CDR George H. Baker, Jr. USN  
 Commanding Officer

**Pogy SSN-647**      1996 (8/27 - Oct)      Yes (9/19)      1. Ty F 9/19/96 (2)

a. OSC  
 b. same w/NP notation  
 c. pr Scicex-96 w/NP notation  
 d. pr Bear riding sub  
 e. USCS Ch #4 pr  
 f. Same + 2 RS  
 USCS Ch #4 pr cachet  
 USCS Ch #4 pr cachet

2. Peleliu 8/27/96 (depart)  
 3. John Paul Jones 11/26/96 (return)  
 USCS Ch #4 pr cachet

Pogy departed San Diego for the second scientific Arctic cruise of 70 days, reaching the NP Sept 19 but not surfacing there. She surfaced Sep 20 110 nm from NP. She used a donated fancy cancel similar to that of Sand Lance and an additional fancy cancel prepared by the ship.



**Springfield SSN**      761      1996      No      None

None  
 Unspecified Arctic operations.

**NR-1**      1997      No      Southern CT mc 9/29/97 (return)      Arctic Circle Crossing

Conducted a classified operation noted in cachet. ASR Sunbird provided support.

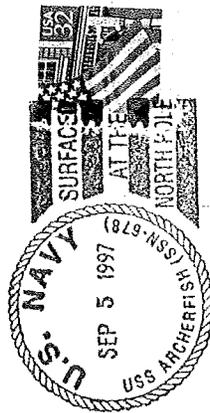
OFFICER IN CHARGE  
 SUBMARINE NR-1  
 FPO AE  
 08537-3405

**SUBMARINE NR-1**

Arctic Circle Crossing  
 Date: CLASSIFIED  
 Longitude: CLASSIFIED  
 Mission: CLASSIFIED

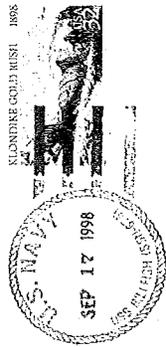
|  |     |                                    |   |
|--|-----|------------------------------------|---|
| San Juan SSN 751 1997<br>Unspecified Arctic operations | No  | None                               | None  |
| Philadelphia SSN 690 1997                              | No  | None                               | None  |
| Archerfish SSN 678 1997 (8/21 - 10/15)                 | Yes | 1. Ty F 9/5/97                     | a. OSC<br>b. OSC w/NP notation<br>c. Tom Armstrong cptr cachet<br>d. Chapter #4 pr cachet<br>e. DRW pr #264<br>f. DRW RS (18 made)<br>g. Hobby Link<br>h. Navy seal cachet<br>i. DRW #266 card (50 made)<br>j. Chapter #4 cachet<br>k. Chapter #4 pr cachet<br>l. Same + ASL logo |
|  |     | 2. Groton Subbase 8/21/97 (depart) |   |
|  |     | 3. Bremerton WA 10/20/97 (arrival) |   |

Archerfish departed New London for the third Arctic scientific cruise of 56 days reached but did not surface at NP. She traveled 15,000 miles ending at Bangor, WA where she was scheduled to be decommissioned. The ship used a donated fancy postmark and separate RS dater to record the NP surfacing. A host of private sponsors prepared cacheted covers for the voyage.



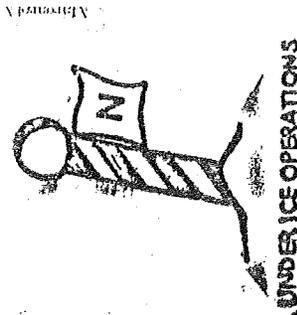
|  |     |                     |                                 |
|--|-----|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Hawkbill SSN 666 1998 (6/1 - 7/16)   | Yes | Honolulu mc 7/16/98 | Circular pr Hawkbill North Pole |
| Hawkbill departed Pearl Harbor for fourth Scicex of 42 days with 2 Navy and 5 civilian scientists; surfaced four times, once at the NP, returned to PH July 13 <sup>th</sup> . |     |                     |                                 |

**Billfish SSN 676**      1998 (9/19 - 12/7)      ?      Ty F 9/17/98      Chapter #4 pr cachet  
 Bremerton 12/7/98      Chapter #4 pr cachet  
 Billfish sailed from Subase Groton to via the Arctic Ocean to Puget Sound Naval Shipyard at Bremerton for decommissioning.



**Memphis SSN 691**      1999      No      None      None  
**Hawkbill SSN 666**      1999 (3/18 - 6/19)      Yes (5/3)      Mira Mesa CA Sta 6/19/99      Foil embossed seal & RS NP  
 w/NP notation

Note: Departed PHTH for fifth Scicex and last operation, Dr Margo Edwards of U of HI led science team. On Mar 25, she dove under ice through Bering Strait, surfaced April 3 for first time at APLIS ice station 150 miles north of Barrow. Picked up scientist, media and ComSubPac for cruise. Returned April 10 to Ice Camp, dropped off media, picked up Senator Robb, Sec Nav and CNO for overnight cruise. On Apr 16 returned to Ice Camp for more researchers and stores and left for the NP. Surfacing on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, the ship scattered the ashes of Dr. Waldo Lyon, founder and director of the Arctic Submarine Lab. Following the ceremony, Hawkbill completed the operation then visited Portsmouth, England and for Lauderdale, FL before returning to PHTH July 1 via the Panama Canal.



**San Francisco SSN 711**      2000      No      None      None  
 Unspecified Arctic operations.

**L. Mendel Rivers SSN 686** 2000 (9/20 - 11/29) Yes (10/15) Bremerton WA 11/29/2000 Chapter #4 pr cachet  
 unclear 2/27/2001 Ship seal imprint w/NP notation  
 Bremerton hc 11/29/00 (arrival) Armstrong cachet

L. Mendel Rivers departed Norfolk, VA to conducted PacSubIcex 3-00, a transit and Arctic operations via the NP enroute to Bremerton WA for decommissioning.

**Scranton SSN 756** 2001 Yes (6/12) San Diego hc 8/15/01 OSC

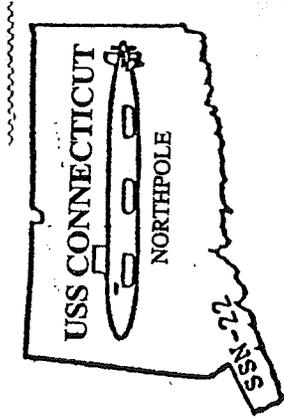
Unspecified Arctic operations. First improved SSN 688 class sub to surface at the NP.

**Connecticut SSN 22** 2001 (Summer) Yes (6/19) Ty F w/hand 6/19/01 OSC

Oklahoma City SSN-723

Scranton SSN-756

LantSubIcex 1-01; first Seawolf class sub to surface at the Pole; visited Faslane, Scotland before returning to New London. The operation tested new ice avoidance sonars, communications and navigation equipment as well as active and passive sonar arrays.



**Oklahoma City SSN 723** 2001 (Summer) No None none

Connecticut SSN-22

Scranton SSN-756

Participated in LantSubIcex 1-01; surfaced in the Arctic but not at NP

**Scranton SSN 756** 2001 (Summer) Yes (6/5, 6/12) San Diego 8/15/01 OSC

Connecticut SSN-22

Oklahoma City SSN-723

Participated in LantSubIcex 1-01; first 688I class boat to surface at the NP.

|  |  |            |   |   |
|--|--|------------|---|---|
| <b>Connecticut SSN 22</b>  | 2002 (Summer)<br>APLIS Ice station     | No         | Prudhoe Bay 4/27/02                             | OSC & APLIS logo                              |
| Participated in IceX-02 testing all systems in Arctic environment; made first through-ice surfacing by SSN 21 class sub.   |  |            |   |   |
| <b>Connecticut SSN 22</b>  | 2003 (Apr - 5/23)<br>APLIS Ice Station | Yes (5/7)  | mute undated<br>Groton Subase 5/23/05 (arrival) | OSC w/NP notation<br>Chapter #4, ASL logo, NP |
| Departed Groton early April for IceX-03, surfaced at APLIS ice station (U of Wash Applied Physics Lab) off Prudhoe Bay AK; conducted tests of ADCAP Mk 48 torpedo, fired 19 weapons; On April 22, Adm Skip Bowman, Representative Roscoe Barlett, former CNO Adm James Watkins and others rode the boat; on Apr 27 after she surfaced through ice, was investigated by polar bear. She passed under the NP May 7 and circled the globe (at the Pole) but did not surface then sailed for Haakonsværn, Norway for a visit from May 12-16. During the cruise tested new sonar, communication and navigation equipment. Ship reused the 2001 fancy RS pictorial cancel w/o date as cachet in addition to OSC. Covers were mute cancelled so were evidently landed at Haakonsværn; regulations did not permit postmarking US franking. |  |            |   |   |
| <b>Honolulu SSN 718</b>  | 2003 (Sep - Nov)                       | Yes (10/8) | Tacoma WA mc 1/15/04                            | OSC w/NP notation                             |
| Honolulu departed Pearl Harbor for PacSubIceX '03, to test a new forward looking sonar system in under ice environment and collect scientific data and water samples for a project of the Arctic Sub Lab and National Science Foundation. She is the first of original 688 class design (w/sail planes) to reach NP. She surfaced through ice four times with longest 25 h ours on the surface; while surfaced 280 miles from NP took photo of 3 polar bears investigating sub.  |  |            |   |   |
| <b>Hampton SSN 767</b>   | 2004 (Apr - ?)<br>HMS Tireless         | Yes (4/19) | San Diego CA mc 2/17/05                         | ASL logo w/NP notation                        |
| Hampton deployed from Norfolk, VA for a join operation with HMS Tireless on IceX-04. On April 19, Tireless surfaced advised Hampton of an open space nearby and both ships remained surfaced for 16 hours.   |  |            |   |   |
| <b>Alexandria SSN 757</b>  | 2004 (June)                            | Yes (6/22) | none  | none  |
| Alexandria departed Subase New London in June to transit to the Pacific via the North Pole, but did not surface there. She arrived at Yokosuka, Japan in less than a month after departing Groton.   |  |            |   |   |
| <b>Oklahoma City SSN 723</b>   | 2004                                   | Yes (8/2)  | None  | None  |
| Unspecified Arctic operations. Reached NP but did not surface.   |  |            |   |   |
| <b>Memphis SSN 691</b>   | 2005 (5/3 - 11/4)                      | Yes        | None  | None  |
| Memphis departed Groton for a WestPac deployment traveling to the Pacific and return via the Arctic.   |  |            |   |   |

Jimmy Carter 2005 (9/25 - 11/9)

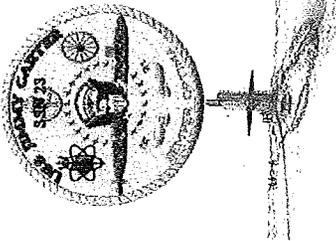
Yes

Bangor Sta 11/9/06  
Tacoma WA mc 11/17/06

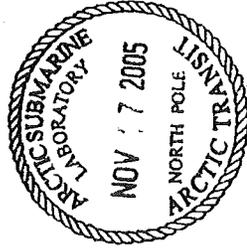
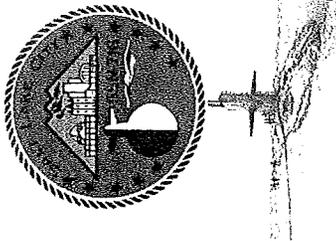
pr OSC  
OSC

Jimmy Carter departed Groton to transfer to her new home port of Bangor, WA sailing the Arctic route via the North Pole. No information as to whether or not she surfaced at the NP.

ARCTIC OPERATIONS



ON TOP OF THE WORLD



Salt Lake City 2005  
SSN 716

Yes (11/17)

ASL 11/17/05

Same  
Same w/zazzle stamp  
Same + zazzle stamp  
Groton CT 12/8/2005 (arrival)

1 OSC w/ NP notation  
2 OSC + small pr OSC + sub  
3 OSC  
4 OSC + small pr OSC  
5 Chapter #4 cachet

Salt Lake City completed an inter-fleet transfer from Pacific to Atlantic via the NP arriving in Portsmouth, NH for decommissioning and scrapping. #2, 3 and 4 cachets were prepared by USCS member Larry La Foe in quantities of 40, 4 and 2 respectively.

*The Arctic Sub Lab began using its transit logo as a postmark with Salt Lake City and has used it since with a separate RS dater.*

Charlotte SSN 766 2005 (Oct - 11/25)

Yes (11/10)

Norfolk VA 4 bar 11/25/05  
Norfolk VA 4 bar 11/29/05 (arrival)

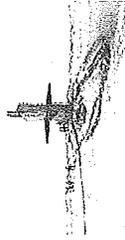
pr OSC & ship w/notation  
USCS Chapter #4

Charlotte departed Pearl Harbor and arrived in Norfolk, VA Nov 25 following a transit under ice from the Pacific Ocean for a major Depot Modernization Period. Cachet sponsored by USCS member Larry La Foe.

ARCTIC OPERATIONS



North Pole - 10 Nov 05  
JSC  
ARCTIC OPERATIONS 046



**Sante Fe SSN 763** 2006 (summer)06

Yes (7/16)

ASL 7/16/06  
ASL 7/16/06  
Ty 2-2 undated

1 OSC w/NP notation  
2 OSC + pr OSC & sub  
3. Pr OSC + circular OSC

Santa Fe left Pearl Harbor for an inter-fleet transfer via the Arctic Ocean and NP to Atlantic for a maintenance overhaul ans systems upgrade at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Kittery, ME. Two covers w/ #2 cachet sponsored by USCS member La Foe.

**Seawolf SSN-21** 2006

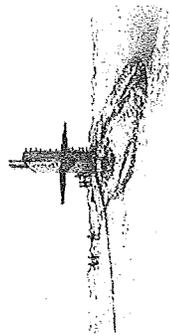
Yes (8/17)

ASL 8/17/06

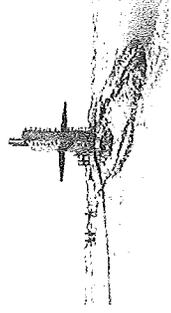
pr OSC

Seawolf conducted unspecified operations in the Arctic reaching the NP Aug 17.

ARCTIC OPERATIONS



ARCTIC OPERATIONS

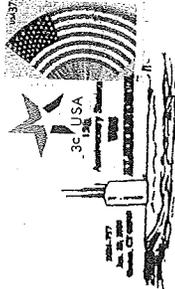
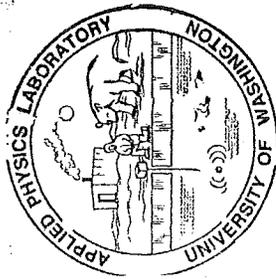


**Boise SSN-764**      2006 (10/30 - 5/30/07)      Yes (11/15)      ASL 11/15/06 +Boise seal imprint  
 Boise Seal imprint  
 1 pr OSC w/NP notation  
 2 OSC + pr OSC + sub

Boise departed from Norfolk, VA via the Arctic and NP for a six month's WestPac deployment. However, the ship schedule was extended and she returned to Norfolk via the Suez Canal. Two covers w/ #2 cachet sponsored by USCS member LaFoe.

**Alexandria SSN 757**      2007 (Mar - Apr)      Yes (4/1)      Ty F Anniv Station 6/29/06      OSC w/NP notation  
 HMS Tireless      Yes (3/19)      ASL 3/19/07 + San Diego 4/24/07.      CO RS w/auto  
 APLIS Ice Station      Prudhoe Bay 3/31/07  
 NP Environmental Obs.      Thule, Greenland 5/21/07      OSC

Alexandria departed Groton to participate in IceX 2007, a joint US-UK operation coordinated by the Applied Physics Laboratory Ice Station built on the Arctic Ocean sea ice north of Deadhorse (Prudhoe Bay) AK. APLIS Ice Camp issued covers w/pr cachet w/postmark Prudhoe Bay 3/31/07. Alexandria polar covers were unaccountably held at the Groton post office and finally processed with a fancy postmark which happened to be on hand.



R.D. RAWLINS  
 PO BOX 981  
 HEALDSBURG CA 95448

USPS  
 NORTH POLE 1 APR 2007  
 Arctic Sub CFB

RSC on reverse



SAN DIEGO CA 921  
 24 APR 07 PM 4 T



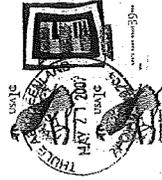
R.D. RAWLINS  
 PO BOX 981  
 HEALDSBURG CA 95448



COMMANDING OFFICER  
 19 MAR 2007  
 HMS TIRELESS

R.D. RAWLINS  
 PO BOX 981  
 HEALDSBURG CA 95448

HEALDSBURG CA 95448



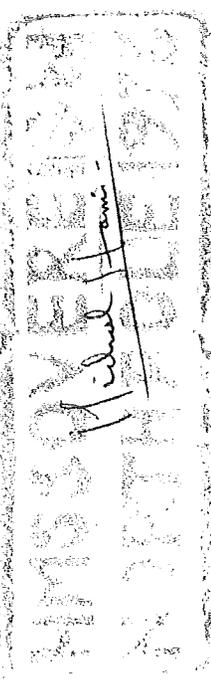
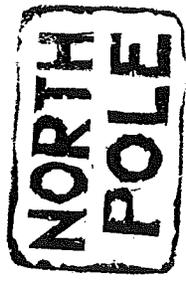
R.D. RAWLINS  
 PO BOX 981  
 HEALDSBURG CA 95448

2. Foreign Nuclear Submarine Operations in the Arctic

| Ship   | Dates & Associated units | North Pole | Postmarks                            | Cachets                         |
|--|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| A. Soviet Union<br>Leninsky<br>Komsomolets   | 1962 (June)              | Yes        | No                                   | No                              |
| A fleet of three Soviet submarines reached the North Pole as reported by the Soviet press and confirmed by the Navigation Officer to the author.   |                          |            |                                      |                                 |
| B. United Kingdom  |                          |            |                                      |                                 |
| Dreadnought  | 1971 (2/20 - Mar)        | Yes (3/3)  | No<br>Helensburg UK 3/17/71 (Return) | RS circular NP<br>CO RS 3/16/71 |
| Dreadnought departed Faslane bound for the North Pole during the most severe part of the Arctic winter. She spent a total of seven days beneath the ice surfacing on six occasions including at the NP. She may have conducted operations with USS Tre pang and Skate. |                          |            |                                      |                                 |

DREADNOUGHT  
NORTH POLE  
3 MAR 1971

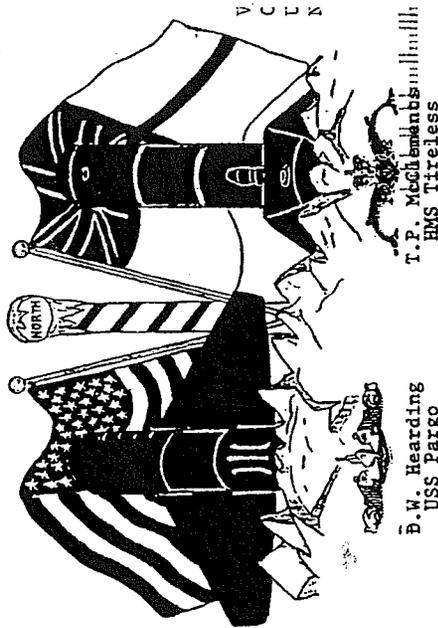
HMS SOVEREIGN  
BFPO LONDON



|  |                    |             |  |                           |
|--|--------------------|-------------|--|---------------------------|
| Sovereign  | 1976 (10/1 - 11/5) | Yes (10/23) | Plymouth mc 11/9/76 (Return)<br>Plymouth mc 11/16/76 | RS NP<br>HMS SOVEREIGN NP |
| Sovereign conducted an extensive study of the Arctic for the Scott Polar Research Institute, surfacing at NP Oct 23 where officers and crew played a game of soccer. |                    |             |  |                           |

|  |               |            |    |
|--|---------------|------------|----|
| <b>Sovereign</b>   | 1979 (Spring) | ?          | -- |
| Sovereign conducted operations with USS Archerfish during SubIcex 1-79.  |               |            |    |
| <b>Valient</b>   | 1981          | ?          | -- |
| Valient conducted operations with USS Silversides during SubIcex 1-81  |               |            |    |
| <b>Superb</b>  | 1987          | Yes (5/18) | -- |
| Superb conducted operations with USS Billfish and Archerfish in Icx 1-81; the three submarine made the first multi-national three submarine rendezvous at the NP |               |            |    |
| <b>Superb</b>  | 1988 (Spring) | ?          | -- |
| <b>Turbulent</b>   |               |            |    |
| The two British submarines conducted LantSubIcex 2-88 with USS Archerfish.   |               |            |    |
| <b>Tireless</b>  | 1989 (?)      | ?          | -- |
| Unspecified Arctic operations.   |               |            |    |
| <b>Tireless</b>  | 1991          | Yes (5/8)  | -- |
| Tireless conducted joint operations with USS Pargo during Icx 91 surfacing at the NP.  |               |            |    |

### North Pole Rendezvous 1991



**Trenchant** 1992 Yes (5/7) --  
Trenchant conducted operations with USS Spadefish both surfacing at NP.



**Tireless** 2004 Yes (4/19) --  
Tireless conducted operations with USS Hampton both surfacing at NP

**Tireless** 2007 ?  
Tireless conducted operations with USS Alexandria and possibly Ice Station APLIS.

COMMANDING OFFICER  
19 MAR 2007  
HMS TIRELESS

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### 3. Diesel Submarine Operations Polar Operations

| Date                | Units  | Remarks  | Covers   |
|---------------------|--|--|--|
| Jul 15-Aug 22, 1946 | Blackfin SS 322, Cusk SS 348,<br>Diodon SS 349, Torsk SS 426<br>Trumpetfish SS 425 | Operation Iceberg                                      | San Diego 10/3/46 (return)   |
| Jul - Sep 1946      | Atule SS 403,<br>Northwind WAGB 282  | Nanook 46, first under pack ice in<br>Kane Basin       |  |
| Sept 1946           | Blower SS 325  | Marginal ice zone ops                                  |  |
| 1946-47             | Sennet SS 408  | Operation Hi Jump<br>(Antarctic)                       | Op Highjump cach. Ty 2z 4/22/47<br>Straight line pm no date<br>Op HJ cachet w/ SL SENNETT<br>( <i>bogus</i> , name added & misspelled<br>on Mt Olympus T-9 1/10/47 cvr |
| Aug 1947            | Boarfish SS 327, Caiman SS 323<br>Cabezon SS 334, Chubb SS 329<br>Nereus AS 11     | Chukchi Sea, Boarfish under ice                        |  |
| Sep 1948            | Blower SS 325, Carp SS 338   | Chukchi sea, Carp under ice                            |  |
| Aug 1949            | Cochino SS 345, Tusk SS 426  | Cochino lost enroute to area north<br>of Norway        |  |
| Aug-Sep 1949        | Baya SS 318, EPC(R) 857,<br>HMCS Cedarwood   | Bering/Chukchi Seas                                    |  |
| Aug 1949            | Toro SS 422  | Norwegian Sea (reached 80°N on<br>simulated war patrol | Not cancelled  |

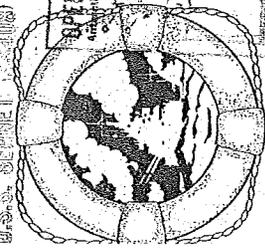
|              |   |  |   |
|--------------|---|--|---|
| Feb 1950     | Perch SS 313, Barbero SS 317                      | Bering Sea   |   |
| Aug-Sep 1952 | Redfish SS 395, Burton Island                     | Beaufort Sea   |   |
| Aug-Sep 1953 | Redfish SS 395, Burton Island<br>Northwind        | Beaufort Sea   |   |
| Aug-Sep 1957 | Trigger SS 564                                    | Escort for Nautilus                                    |   |
| Summer 1958  | Halfbeak SS 352                                   | Escort for Skate                                       | NY 8/25/58<br>New London 9/22/58 (return) |
| Mar 1959     | Harder SS 568, Trout SS 566                       | Newfoundland; furthest diesel under<br>ice - 280 miles |   |
| Mar 1960     | Bang SS 385, Tench SS 417,<br>Tusk SS 426         | Cabot Strait   |   |
| Mar 1961     | Becuna SS 319, Dogfish SS 350,<br>Halfbeak SS 352 | Cabot Strait   |   |
| Mar 1962     | Endemedor SS 340, Tusk SS 426                     | Ops w/Skate, HMS Alderney,<br>HMS Astute               |   |
| 1963         | Becuna SS 319, Tench SS 417<br>Skate SSN 578      | Ops in Cabot Strait                                    |   |

J.S.S. DIODON (SS40)  
"Operation Seaboy"  
Post 71° 00' 199



Capt. F.M. Swisley,  
Sec 7, Genl. Del.  
Michigan Genl. Hosp.  
Tucson, Wash.

U.S.S. SECRET (SS408)

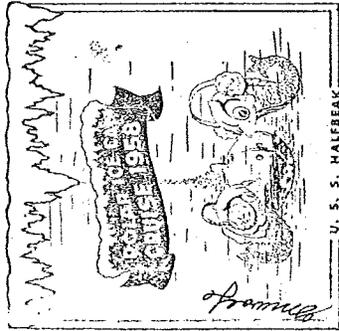
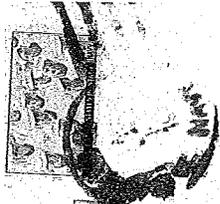


OPERATION HIGHJUMP  
Arctic Expedition, 1946 and 1947

BRUCE E. WOODBURY  
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WALTON, N. C.

THE U.S. NAVY  
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TASK FORCE 69



U. S. S. HALFBEAK  
55322

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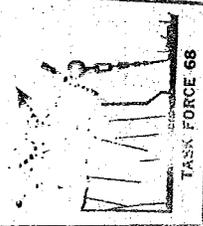


VIA AIR MAIL

CSC., Chester S. Knowlson, USN  
465 Oxford Avenue,  
Palo Alto, Calif.

U.S.S. SECRET (SS408)

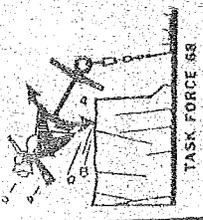
OPERATION HIGHJUMP  
Arctic Expedition, 1946 and 1947



TASK FORCE 68

U.S.S. SECRET (SS408)

OPERATION HIGHJUMP  
Arctic Expedition, 1946 and 1947



TASK FORCE 68

Mrs. Nellie Capron  
Box 35  
South Laguna  
California, U.S.A.



Bogus cover

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